

o·blēk

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¹¹oblique (o•blēk) *Gram.* **a.** *Oblique case*, any case except the nominative and vocative (or sometimes, except the nominative, vocative and accusative): see CASE sb.¹ **b.** Of speech or narration: Put in a reported form, with consequent change of person and tense. 1530 PALSGR. *Introd.* 30 Pronownes . . . have but thre cases, nominatyve, accusatyve and oblique, as, *je, me, moy.* 1568 ASCHAM *Scholem.* II (Arb.) 158 Salust (hath) *Multis sibi quisque imperium petentibus.* I beleue, the best Grammarien in England can scarce giue a good reule, why *quisque* the nominatiue case . . . is so thrust vp amongst so many oblique cases. 1882 FARRAR *Early Chr.* II 385 There is scarcely a single oblique sentence throughout St. John's Gospel.

o•blēk/11

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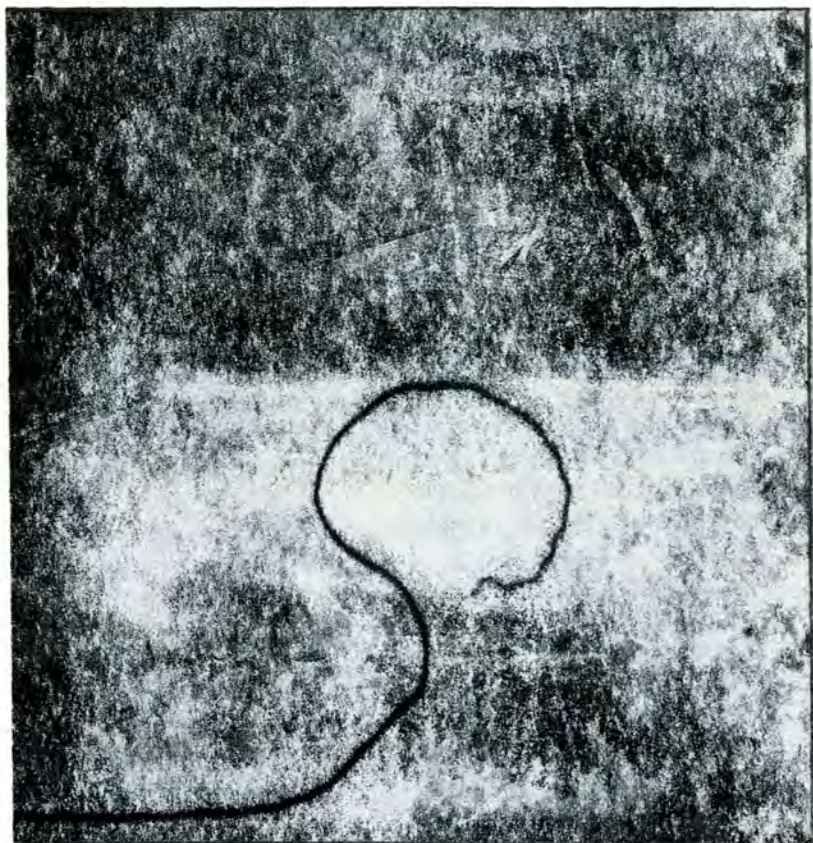
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Portfolio by DAVID VON SCHLEGELL, Untitled, ink on paper,
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If It All Went Up In Smoke

*that smoke
would remain*

the forever
savage country poem's light borrowed

light of the landscape and one's footprints praise

from distance
in the close
crowd all

that is strange the sources

the wells the poem begins

neither in word
nor meaning but the small
selves haunting

us in the stones and is less

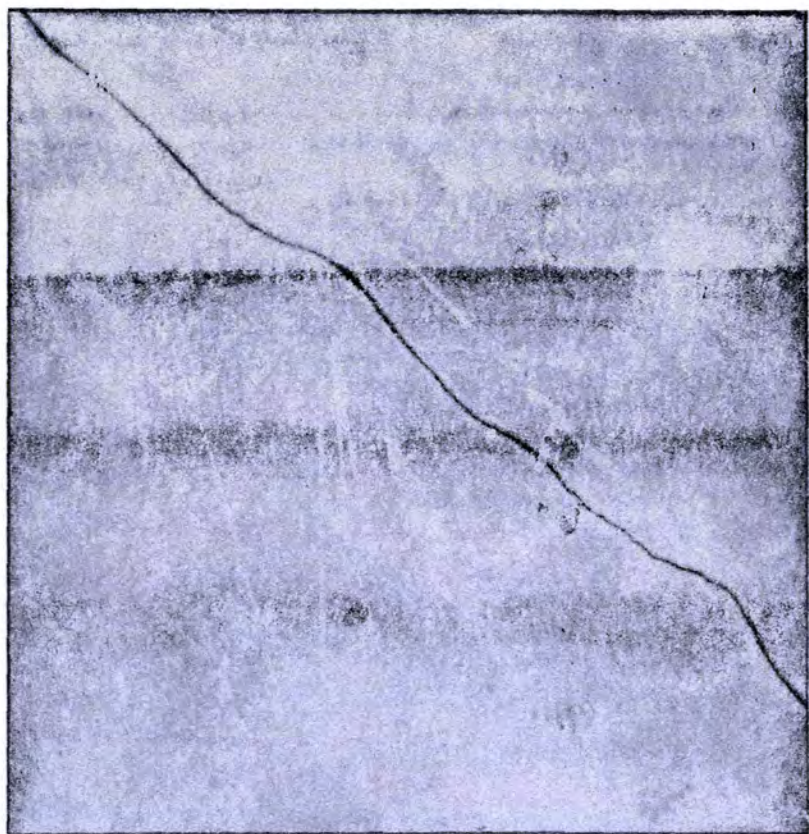
always than that help me I am
of that people the grass

blades touch

and touch in their small

distances the poem
begins

— George Oppen



ANN LAUTERBACH

FOR EXAMPLE (I)

If everything tends to become real
Then whose trial has ended
On a scale of one to ten
In which three is a dream
On a floor
No one can see.
Also, perhaps, maybe
Elicit the shard from its ferver
To display amnesia: one person in jail,
Another walking across a roof
Where what is written on the sky
Brings formality to the event
As when we first ask, "What is it?"
The world, loosened like a hem, is
What we step out on
And are pulled along
Away from our doors
Not so much appeased as grafted
Onto the long dark pause.
Pointing, not seeing anything,
Not knowing the name for what isn't there.

But the prestige of a moment is not its name.
After all, we sleep among secrets
And wake to their burden.
If we could pay attention at all points
Then theory would be what really is there.
But then another intimacy begins
While a chorus of male voices
Carries the bar away/raft
Of flowers brought in to a girl/her body

Emerging from the story as a new link
On an old sheet/ignorant
Single ambition of one hero listening to
Another but not listening
To this spring's snow.
Only the women speak of war, for example.
"To be prolonged in the first place
So we dream of escape"
She said in the midst of history.
The dictionary is part of the clutter
Lure, decoy, bait, snare, trap
And so to cross the heart
Might make us only here or here only
Depending on the translation.
Was one aflame? Is this a lake?
And why is part of the flower
Mentioned at night
When she finds these love knots
In another dream she cannot remember.
And around the sinuous thread
The doctor with his pen
Draws a line across her abdomen
Like the general in the green room
With his green map and stick,
His war game of war under the strong light
Of the canonical: Kafka, Freud, and whatever girls
Might make an example. Festering green bar,
Nothing on the menu available.
Et peut-etre yes, now she understands
Why she would rather not mention names
But what was it said of the singular?
The wall could be a lining of an inner partition
If everything tends to become real. It's true, I was sad all day
For no good reason like a forgotten task

Attached to too many site-specific verbs:
To want, desire, wish, require, please, try, attempt,
You get the idea. Only the finality of rhythm
On which to insist, rhythm as the example.
Now the resourceful writer becomes a drunk
As she stands against the church wall
Under a clear liquid light.
Nothing is early enough, for example.
We are not located in the world
But in its particulars:
What's done is done;
The show is down.
Tyranny comes naturally to the dead.
That was the perilous night
Mentioned by the composer
And copied onto the page.
The fat belly revealed, the wound
Similar but not the same. Indifference
Spoils what is real, for example.

So we find ourselves in the excess
Of what is already here
And want to speed up to the good parts.
Some noises are glamorous, like dance,
The discipline of celebrated silence,
But love moans and collapses
Under a saturated roof
And we admit to being ruined, at least once.
The glassy eye is anointed by its tear.
If you save everything that has hurt you
You might come close to saying its prayer,
Passing the basket from hand to hand,
Not having to memorize the empty space
Where you just were.

Then survival could be negative space
Where what might be reconstructed
Has fallen away beyond erasure
To the small case before travel.
Get back in your room.
Is anything in childhood mutual?
The lifted parameters of touch, for example,
Mingled with the stung, as when reaching up
Above clover to the magics of another season
Which might be serene. They danced
Under an awful light, and her shoes, her gowns,
Twisted in shadow; only the shadow has lasted.
The clasp of his hands on her back, for example.
The limbs of the corridor could not speak
But were folded under
Where wet hair was out of sequence
On the black floor.
The train pulled its litany across
A populous tread, torn
Into geography and a wish to stay up later than time
When whatever wysteria was would bloom
To hand down its scented ladder.
On that side of the street
The boys were always ready
But the stairs were dangerous and locked.
To protect what is new, to laugh
Without ambush or cartoon; to sleep safely.
It is a matter of listening
And so learn how to depart.
What is dragged behind is a sound
Which is not understood
As the city gathers and gathers
As near as what will not come back.

From up here on the bleachers
Things seem real, but provisional, like a day
In which only paper airplanes sail by
And eventually cover the field.
Unfolded and flattened, they reveal
Notes and pictures in colored pencil;
Hearts, trees, flowers, rhyming couplets
And other impedimenta of the age.
And perhaps the game is halted
On account of this weather
Which is only the missing voice
And truant litter
Of desire. The athletes' faces
Hiss with sweat and rage
And Mom is picking up socks
And spare change, paying the bills,
Lifting the nearly empty carton of milk
Off the shelf in the fridge.
Her task is to remember
Whatever comes next.
To her, time seems like an all-too-gregarious
Protagonist, not so much eager to please
As insistent and daft, adept at charming the room
Full of anxious initiates
Into voting his way
Without knowing the facts, for example.
She thinks how rain on the roof
Does sound like applause
As she closes the windows.
By now the airplanes are mush
And the fans have departed
In their vivid multi-colored slickers

And hats. It seems strange to think
Each knows where to go, although some may not get there.
Whereas once all narratives seemed false
Now all seemed true; the confusion
Was arbitrary. This spot, this dime.
She turns on the shadow of her breath
Like a bird on a branch.
Touch me not was how it sounded
From across the field: a page
Torn from a journal in which she confessed
She could no longer wait, writing into the wait.

Maybe all absences should be excused.
The banquet, in any case, was dull;
The soufflé didn't rise.
But things fall
On a regular basis, especially in spring.
And sometimes we hear them, petal by petal,
As when we put our ears to the chest
Where the letters are kept.
Be sure to put the broken glass
In a brown paper bag so it won't cut
Someone's hand; there's enough blood
In the carpet and in the sand.
Even the mattress is stained
And, like sand, indented
With the shadow of weight.
This represents a decade of dreams
Which also should be put in a sack or box
And shipped to a new address: strange,
How the body takes its dreams with it
Like a city buried under the rubble of ages
Never to be found. Strange, too,

How what is and what isn't
Make a quixotic braid
Which, like weather, has no end
Other than those we invent
To measure change. Rain again today.
You can hear it too, sloshing through the gutter
Like a rope of sound. Instead of falling
You could walk downstairs
Onto the familiar street, but be careful
And take your umbrella: remember, the street
Won't miss you. It's a one-way street.

FORREST GANDER

FROM *DEEDS OF UTMOST KINDNESS*

Mostly I am thinking about your body
Which has run through my fingers
Like a river burning underground

Like a river burning underground
For which there is no hour no language
No ease from its molten glow, no music whatsoever

For which there is no hour no language
But a theory and practice of go
Emptying itself only of mouthlight

But a theory and practice of go
Small birds that strafe
A case-hardened crow, I want you to mistake me for

The angel the world is subtracting
Small birds that strafe
The end surrounded by scaffolding

Woven into the fabric, a negative,
The angel the world is subtracting
Its wings blazing in the coffin of the delta

Its wings blazing in the coffin of the delta
A case-hardened crow I want you to mistake me for
Woven into the fabric, a negative,

Or your pubic hair twisting into a braid
Which has run through my fingers
The end surrounded by scaffolding

Emptying itself only of mouthlight
Mostly I am thinking about your body
Or your pubic hair twisting into a braid

No ease from its molten glow, no music whatsoever

So I arrive
Uncircumsized of heart unto
Your body's landscape, marvellous,
Its lean parts straining
To become visible
At the start of a concentration
That would impose
Itself like a forehead
Against a rough wall.
Nor is that all
That can be said.
The thinnest emerald
And red motes drift
Slantwise through this wholly
Startling light, expose
The possibility I might well
Hold it in my mouth
And speak it to you, enter
Your dark with my tongue,
The Palestine of your mysteries
Which increase like a sum
Of our breath. My reader
Looks over my shoulder
As I write.

LARRY FAGIN

SIX POEMS

The spontaneity of the fire remains mysterious. No one can know much about any subject. The moon don't wonder how low you are. Butt out. Go to the window, listen for the cadence bearing no resemblance to time. How faint the tune. Her stereo is inoperative. The void allows for position and motion and sneezing about nothing. At no time is there a zeitgeist. John Travolta and Donna Summer standing on ice in China cooking liver. Jerk the handle and the disorder that is the universe returns to its former singularity. Poit! A single thistle. Sit still for it. Non-being is repeatable, open-ended, even-handed. Don't wait up for me, just now getting straight. They say Scotty got Brodey's body. Bring me words from earth's other edge. Edgewords. Let your work do its work. Renunciation cloud lake. The flight of all her shoes, none of them ever came down. The book is a better window, though difficult to shelve without ruining other books. How the eyes converge when looking at an object, a small stone buffalo materialized in a corner. How many bugs I kill in a lifetime. Love that cannot live but never dies. Midnight on First Avenue four fashion models beat each other on the head with long cardboard tubes from the garbage. Action should be completely burned out, a monster-teeth grindup. One foot in the groove, then nothing. Slam your doors in golden silence. This is the final day of the exhibition of sheet rock. I can't wait to think about it. That should be as thought not written. Balling the paper.

Good evening music lovers. Set your needle to the mile of grooves. Like it had eyes, the circle with the hole in the middle. One head grows out of another. Think again. It's the Basie band but the Kenton orchestra. Huffed and puffed the oldest magic word, a word I pronounce rather than say. Paint that away from me. Out to the edges of Flatland. (The arrow continues around the earth.) Stop in a stink of brakes. Let's have a meeting here now, all the doctors in Grafton. I can see the whole room, we'll make it out of ourselves. Sound dried to a mask. Whole new thing, man. Hang it on the stinking wall. Something so seemingly complete, not made by any two things striking together. Maybe, maybe not. The floor is spinning but I am still, held to a spell, under that old black joe called coffee. No one gets out of here alive. Connecting door from coast to coast blew over. Everybody lunged forward in Basin Street East, dark to themselves. Speak at God. Does he have a leg? You gotta stand by it. Why do you evade the facts? Electrostatic baking enamel. Know who I saw in Pathmark today? Mister Bodylegs. He's got his own nose to grind. Reverse the liquid. Back to the holes of communication, the ride you are taken on inside the black lines of force. They'll do it every time. Who wrote *The Beautiful Indifference*? There is no agreement. Ask the strolling alto player on the roof. Helicopter Knowings. He's looking for his note, won't stop until he hits it. To be held for a long time, motion to still. Sticker in the throat. Notes leading speakers to listeners. You are listening to the mucus of Clyde Lucas. No it isn't funny and yes I'm very sorry. Wasting all this good pain. All the music you never heard rolled up in a marble. I alone can hear the rhapsody, a little less in the end. Deep ending. Guess who drowned in the lake today.

a skit for Mme. Bowery

Honey I shrunk the abyss. I'm wearing it as an earring (space dismissed). Have you ever seen a more adorable undergirding of all matter-energy quanta? How was your day, cactus man? Knocked the bell up in the sky. Hal and Marge are on their way. I'll throw a lamb on the rack, you vacuum and generally straighten (in a triangular manner). Loud fast rules. Home car life health. Mummy girl, you're worse than an art film based on a difficult novel. I'm not going to have a discussion the length of the house. See me or forget me. Bring! It's Señor Wences from the bank, we're overcombined. Leave us leap. This abyss is an abyss of its own and it has a right to exist. The host opens, spirits commingle. Garbage in. Name your anhodonia. Through the lips, over the gums, look-out stomach, here it comes. Intellectual malted milk with egg. Is that correction fluid toenail polish? Sick in a cup. Take your lumps, one or two. Here's the adoptik infink now, our little impaler. Give old pete skin. Love one of your hands, the other is a talon available to anyone with skin on their face. Critical mass — all you can eat! We eat everything except planes and trains. How about the pickled head of a gorilla? Tootie, no! Go to your sealed room. She can kick a giraffe in the face. Don't let those paintings breathe on you, Marge. Tacking on or snipping off groups of atoms, now that we're up on the view. Honey, you're the nutty possessor. Gimme a pigfoot. The key to enlightenment is scheduling. We can't take the bomb with us. NOT-NOT is aware that liberation exists in the indefinite. We should close our eyes, not open them. Roberta Flack on the watering can float. Our ancestors crossed the plains in covered jars. After-dinner myth? Here's NOT-NOT now. Floating rot. Where do the noses go?

It shouldn't fall too heavily on the people who are least able to avoid having it fall heavily on. Fall after newton. The ontological vegetable. Who records the lines made by feet? In a wolf pack it happens as it happens. From the water to the hill, any bird can make it. Form as frozen movement. The dance is sung. A thrown head propels her into a backroom, Hulot's Silo. Get a piece of the rock that split the map up the back like a funeral suit. Almost anything you do with two hands would indicate two sides of something. Lunge beyond a lit area. Chemical dumps. How do you change object-to-be-looked-at-ness? Issues of spectacle surrounded the representation of the breast. Limited by oneness (one big inhaler). I don't take the law of the father strongly. Pulled the hair out of the sides of her head. Another elsewhere. Dopey's big toe. See this in utero? Miss Violet Organ. Instantly she is a whale, greeting the hand-bird. Who brings tea to my table? The last person in crack the whip. And I never listen.

after Simone Forti

You could be home by now, say the houses to the cars, weaving through the mysterious barricades. Poison umbrella. Whatever it is, we seem to be inside it. Hide in plain sight. The boats go down the street behind the cars and the photographs. The things you *pull* out of people. Will these bodies do. They drop you after death, though you've only made yourself more available. Lonely Tylenol. One fingersnap = 65 instances. Children build their houses out of old blankets, a city for the passing of time. Pulled a frozen rope off the rug. Go out with scissors and cut off cuffs. A little jew haggling about the most sacred possessions of mankind! Nature loses interest, invest in loss. No wig, no sound, no time.



"To press on without fear of explanation" (Prynne), but step by step thrust me back. Apple stuck in your back, victim of grunted stoves. By leaving home nothing is broken. Fled the block, blot of selfhood. Clouds slopped over into the street, leaves clicked and flew around the yard, portions of brightness undone. The rain was long and thin, unnotatable. We're sinking, can you feel it. This whole planet is a forge, long torn down. Last taped words, now and then entangled. I will move into the old yeshiva and write my plentiful nevers for nothing.

JENA OSMAN

UPBRINGING

“use the topography as the
underlying skeleton on which
to lay other things.”

The skeleton of a building is accustomed to being a house
whether accustomed or usual
never leaning
like a leaf holding up a child
also able to float:
this is the puzzle of a man of low birth
and thus assassinated in a pail of water
where his body now rises to the surface
to count the rooms of the house
I will need some sort of calculator or weather vane —
this glass transom for instance
was convenient in the campaign
and a light not associated with societal bloom.
Sequester if you must, but understand the consequence:
neither life nor a more protected life will lead you
to that other life
if so, the body indicates
only as tea leaves once the water has been drained
the parts manufactured away from the site

I like when it becomes this color she said while looking out
looking out at the air which was yellow due to a storm let us blush
home count it up. However I feel as if I feel as if. Now the build-
ings are out of site, beneath the yellow and a ghost as if I feel.
Terrible terrible I said in response but unlike myself too this air
not moving enough inward and outward her breathing sequestered
in a perception from the window of her home. I like it when I can
breathe she says in doing so but kept alone in a tower in constant
fear of isolation so as to populate to populate the room the rooms
with others one of which am I.

holding better branches out in the fist
an apparatus, a doll
held down into one world
recedes the flesh not far enough
from a desire
so the tubes of commutation
fill with iron, girders
the modern steel
which allows us to place the self
to one side of the self

mirrors arrange in a silver tray
dedication, a lair lamp
adore, *dream*
the brutal part of the feign
the sin error I am for
surly under the cadence
below but so north
vacant hour the edge of a core
approach through the alley
push the floor
maybe ruins of a counter hour
a few days there came and forgot

How necessary it must be, she said, to tip the scale in on its own neck and let only so much water find its way out into a part, a quality. I support the arid matter, she said, that only beats itself rag, churns out rough face or body got all the oil drop of a flame chart liquescent marry. How necessary it must be to adapt the scale, she said I'm my own neck I meet a drop of water near my way out of it my way of curing simple rages and cuts a trial rig to take you away from ceremony or inconsequence to reason the pair away from each parapet.

pastor pasture metal hand
see hear marvel
in accordance with a space closed in

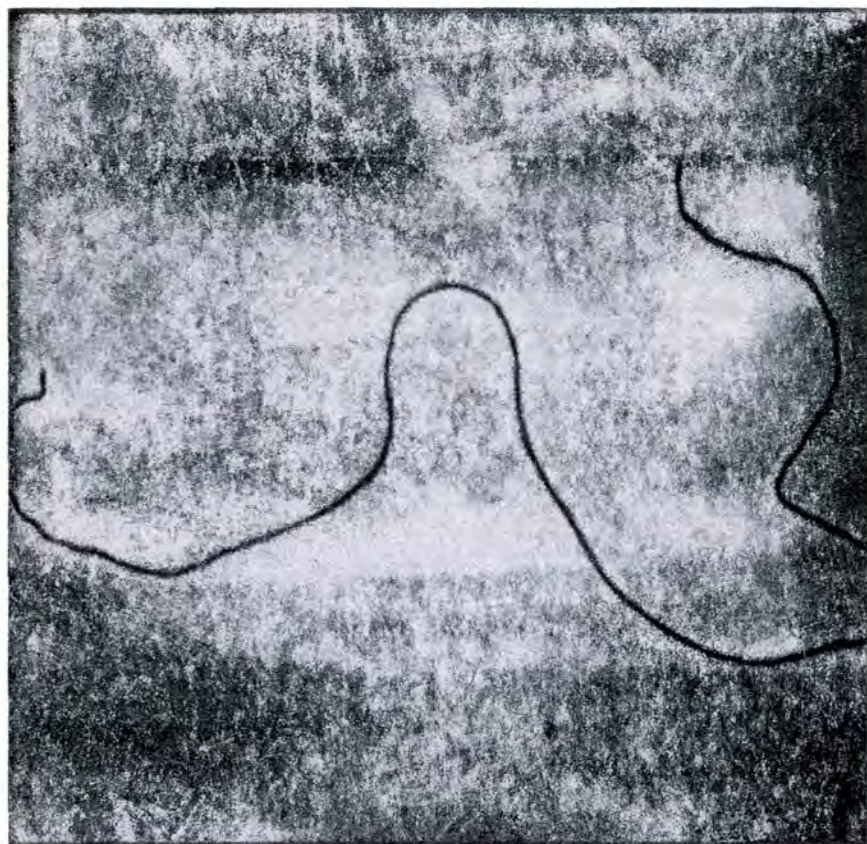
the rain was mounted on levers held in coils on an old engine
action was slow
it first was revolved around a carousel holding letters
and played like a piano
the wind was employed in blowing the tickets
the letters were mounted on tickets
held by a man in charge of alignment
he was the heart of the machine
and believed in glass to enclose the inner working
and to render him "noiseless"
rain in the boots
hands thrown up in disgust the action
was slow they all could see it
his fingers hesitating on the coils

With the feet she said, with the feet leaving each one then done
behind, the steps step, shipped behind the body. Next to nothing.
The extended edges of the wheel, well, spokes, thirst. So much
depends on a correspondance with the outer she said world. A
dance step makes the flowers tremble. The voice is a system of
deposits. She said. She said she said. Identify clamberers. They
are fractured beyond an arbor, far from bone. And now here.

There never are more
than circles drawn
that quieter fit the calm turn
around never my ever wrist
a lunar disk
a gone replication of pursual

definite, not as a four-way mirror
wandering through and under gravity
a biological sphere connected to a radius
portrayed by a particular motion

tines
as
fingers
in the play that exhibits them
as articles up for auction
or are they simply bones
a small set of vertebrae around my wrist
caught up in representing something finer
shinier



BILL BERKSON

SHELTER
BINDING GRIEVANCE
CONTENTED LEAST (A PLAY)

SHELTER

Do you recall the words to fog
or flotsam slipping legs onto the laundry bag?

So many have left the human party
'twixt meats and jellies
that now seem pitched from chill couch ease.

Their message units stroll anelastic yet personable.

The jocular finality holds sway
at face value, like a national police force

the twisty miles in tow,
some original mass remanded.

BINDING GRIEVANCE

Relief filled with donors
appetition skips a day, an hour.
Impressive muscles grow among
the hilly routes between.

This is your interim contract.

In the undertow, as Winslow
Homer saw it, Miss
Liberty negotiates her wits,
a core problem that functions
primly. The diverse throng suited up.
Everyone is a kind of Miss Liberty as far as
the powers that see.

Line at denuded salad bar
slows: key under mat;
oxygen beds
pianissimo woman.

After the dust had settled
between speeches,
classes will resume.

Call us back with your name,
or could you do without?

CONTENTED LEAST: A Play

He: Promised, promises, in thrumming flatly merged.
I turn in process's despite, short of shining loss.
Red digits toot on the Big Board clock,
Big Bird out of sync with fundament.
The annihilated numeral harks to an eco' latch –
that oldtime *burthen*:
Nonexistence cures the rose, toughens nails, stiffing the
churl, procedural.
Thousands denial awhile glance duskwise drag crunch unfit repose
to shun the daily wedge

She: and try again not to be carried away. Inhale!

DENNIS PHILLIPS

THIS LENGTH, A PREDICTION OF DOWNPOUR
PESCALLO
UN QUARTO
PROACTIVE
GESTURES, RESIDUE
ALBA

THIS LENGTH, A PREDICTION OF DOWNPOUR

Overtly clearing to a party line
then a speech would make sense
temptation the better part, our record.

Whose bonfire, signal, hilltop.
A canker, reported, observed, lanced, detailed.
There, against the blue mountains, our temperature.

The sense of irony equal to belief
equal to the sound of rocks connecting underwater.
Even according to the control group, even the biased.

PESCALLO

They were only i.e. reflectors (glacial basin)
over a fixed number of kilometers (this region)

Said chiuso though the other roads ended in water.
Preview; we asked; some reason to work;
a temporal thing.

But on a ladder in tight tight pants
her garden oblivious, these pulse beats beyond the wall.

The heights, aristocrats' dominion, always in sight.

The boat they found without a bottom, a way to please her.

UN QUARTO

It would only seem fair to conceal it.
A past action is recorded, separate,
a different place, a new time.

Insomnia would not be a valid category.

Suddenly the child was ours.

If there is a stage then there is a distant lake
cut by glaciers in a basin now filled with smoke.

There just hadn't been the impulse.

A general dark, a few surprised faces, the perfect answer.

PROACTIVE

Registration / regicide
orphaned on a dock or tumbled.
The dust surfaced line, opposed to.

Nor Scilla, curious, opine.
This weight, or that.
A garrison in fact.
Torches.
Inclines.
Lake moistened wood.

GESTURES, RESIDUE

Cups they brought a ritual carpet, no synthetic process so bold
or acumen as they define it accomplished in a tethered room
new each day.

Hunters and gatherers, as in salutation, as those we salute
these metaphors and allegories just remaindered a sole
invention when nothing could otherwise be exchanged.

A milder form of initiation, counting any object for example, stars
or sand, rehearsed in a longhouse a departure never really prepared
for the reeds recently gathered an obelisk or was it oracle?

ALBA

So many, such high foreheads
and only a melody and variations would emerge
a basic physics and geometry
considerate, though, to have left the textbooks
the forest cold but full of sound
diurnal vocal nocturnal movement
an even greater recombining
yet beyond the bounds of exhibitionism,
a tempo of extremities, then, a digest.

ELIOT WEINBERGER

SŌGI'S Renga TO HIMSELF

The end: so soon: cherry blossoms:

Cherry blossoms: sudden breeze: nightfall collects in the fluttering shadows: Through the shadows: there: over the rooftops: the mountain dimly aglow in moon and haze: In moon and haze this path I walk: is the path of thought: This path of thought: where the dream came: where the dream went back: She went back: she who came but could not be seen: over the endless hills of grass: Endless grass: brittle with frost: the path uncertain: Uncertain path: told only by that which is trampled: withered: grass:

Withered grass: why: do bugs creak their love for autumn: when autumn rushes their end: Rushing to the end in roaring wind: typhoon: terror and rage: Rage erases the sky: cloudless: transparent: the moon: Moon: the gate at Kiyomi Barrier opens: dawn floats over the river: Sumida River: when: would I ever be here again: to wake again on this shore: To sleep again on this shore: I cannot share this with her: she left me here: Here: my thoughts were spoken once: on a hill with no name: on a hill of flowers: Flower hill: I've given up the world: but who: can resist this transient spring: Spring: the mist that screens the world guides me home: Mist will guide me home: to wait for the smoke to drift from my pyre: In the drifting smoke of their miserable fire: salt collectors wait for the moon to rise: They wait for the moon that lights their labor: the autumn moon they hate: The autumn moon I hate: his promises that vanished: dew dripping off the grass as night falls: Nightfall: which: house is my husband going to:

Which house is he going to: he'd cross any woman's field:
fields cover everything: Fields cover every place he crosses:
at home they wait: and wonder if he'll come back: Wonder-
ing if I'll come back: why: I came aboard this boat: set for
the point where waves meet the clouds: Where waves meet
the clouds: in a sea of weeping: desolate: bitter sea: Bitter
sea: China is here: beneath this same sky: beneath this same
misery: The sameness of misery: even in Japan: anyone
alive suffers: Alive and suffering: cherry blossoms blossom
by the hut: spring rushes to its end: Spring rushes to its end:
at the edge of the hills: the village in a screen of mist:
Through a screen of mist: the wake of the moon coming
down: birdsong breaks through with the morning light:
Morning light: dewdrops fizzle: why: wake just to say good-
bye: We woke to say goodbye: his coat had covered us: now
cold wind is my quilt: Wind for a quilt: long day turns to
night: still no word: No word: even desire withers: the heart
that would never forget forgets: Forget: better forget: than a
habit of miserable neglect:

In miserable neglect: yet: the decent life: even in a ruined
house: overgrown with weeds: Even in a ruined house over-
grown with weeds: flowers blossom for those who know
what flowers mean: Flowers: in their moment: bright dress-
es: robe of mist: In the robes of mist: the path through the
fields is lost: The path lost: another day of temple bells:
nothing was learned: Nothing learned: though I know the
Laws I cannot find the Way: Can't find the Way: 80 years:
old as the Buddha: and no clarity: No clarity: the moon
grows bigger: it does not light my mind: My mind: in the
east: mist rising: the weight of desire: The weight of desire:
in autumn the wind will come into the pines: he will come if
you wait: I wait: some other: draws him to the cedar at her

gate: My gate creaks: but the path to it: open as my pain: As open as his pain: seen through the fields: gathering wood for the temple: He gathers wood: frost falling on his sleeves: frost on frost on frost on the moss:

Frost on the moss: can't sleep: the weight of my troubles through the winter's night: Winter night: the moon even colder: dimming with dawn: Dawn: out in the reeds: a crane parades its sorrow with every cry: Every cry: the waves of desire: the wild wind and waves: Wild waves: will: this government: ever bring peace to the mountains and rivers: Mountains and rivers: will: the land not fall to ruin: the peasants to ruin: Ruined peasants: the harvest they awaited: frozen in autumn frost: Autumn frost: grasses and grains: brown and withered around the hut: Around the hut: the sound of washers beating wash: geese in the twilight crying: Crying: the moon: uselessly moves on: I lie in this weight of bitter troubles: Bitter trouble: he never came: I thought it was the rain: but the rain's long gone: Gone: knowing what's missing makes it worse: And worse: could: he have heard me say: I hope he forgets: why: should he forget: He forgets: his letters stop: the only words are carried by the wind:

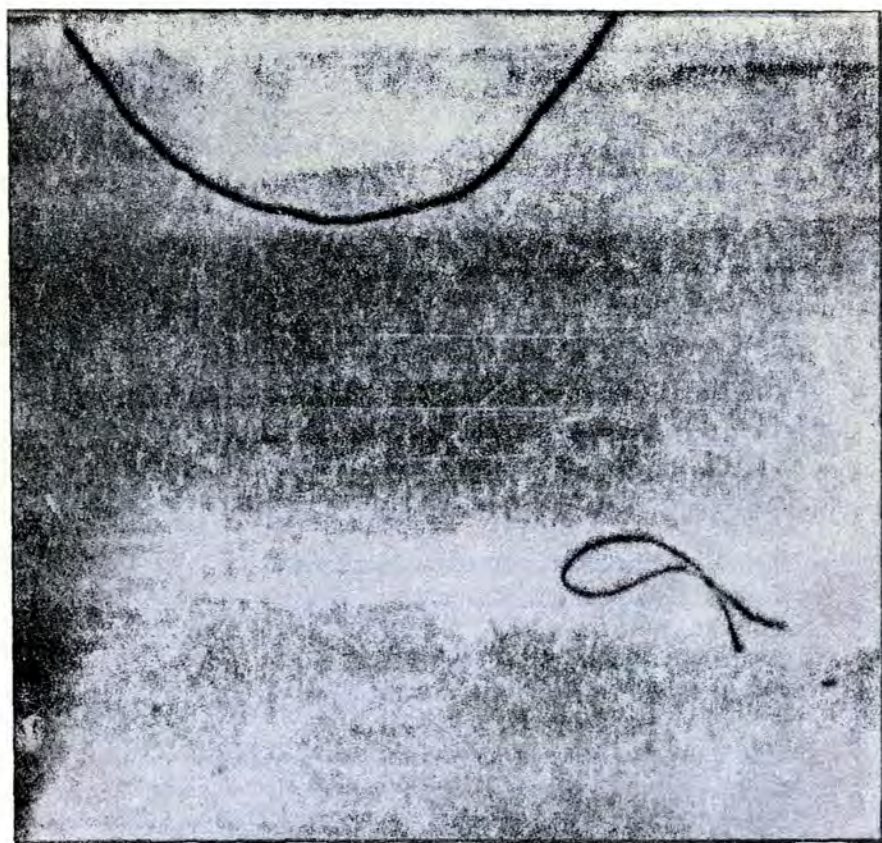
Carried by the wind: blossoms already fallen: what: is left as nightfall comes: Nightfall comes: spring comes: the old capital: warm days its only pride: Only pride: a flutter of light: so real and so unreal: the world: This world: haze for an anchor: the boat drifts off: Drifting: this scene: moon rising: aglow on the water: Aglow on the water: autumn night: uselessly moves on: dawn breaks on the shore at Akashi: Akashi shore: a deer cries longing: his mate somewhere far: Far off: he'll: kill himself on the mountain of desire: Desire: why: brush away such dust: when: such dust is everywhere: Dust everywhere: the stones on the floor: all that's left of the palace: What's left of the palace: grass and

shrubs entangled: In the tangle: wind: picks out the seedling
rice: Rice: fireflies: they keep their troubles silent: This
silence: but my heart glows through the hidden love:

Hidden love: was it: her sleeve: or the morning haze: In the
haze: even spring still bitter: crossing the hills alone:
Alone: this wasted life: an old crane left behind: Left be-
hind: I hope: to live to see the autumn: but what: hope could
autumn bring: What hope of autumn: whole years move on
through this long night: Long night: even the moon moving
on: that: it may not give me pleasure: No pleasure: the sky
drizzles on the drizzle on my face: Face: rain: sky: gather in
the misery of my heart: My heart: the storm rushes in from
the mountain above: Above: mountain path through the
gathering clouds: Clouds gather: falling rain for the water-
fall that propels the Yoshino rapids: Yoshino rapids: do not:
ask about the distant past: The past: how: did it vanish with
no trace: No trail: my hut: moon shining on the tangling
weeds:

Tangled weeds: the hills colored by colorless drizzle: Drizzle
colorless as his cold drained heart: His heart: how: could I
have let it: define my world: This world of desire: where all
I desire: is a little bottle: to end this life of desire: To end:
and be reborn: on the lotus throne: Lotus: raindrops: a
summer shower: linger on the petals: then fall: Falling: as:
wind breaks the clouds: I wake: from this: unfinished
dream: A dream: I woke and saw a faint shadow: cast: my-
self: my old age: in this: dying light.

[1499/1991]



JOAN RETALLACK

STRANGE ATTRACTORS

*for Jackson Mac Low
and Anne Tardos*

[Note: The italicized phrases in this piece are taken from
the Barrett translation of the transcript from the trial of Jeanne d'Arc.]

creep up on *discover disclose distance*
a connection a *therefore* a tongue
HOW TO: tell the truth is a strange experimental friction when
asked what instruction this voice gave her
prose and literary innocence is long enough
a friend told me Marx took up golf when he
this could be true Lenin once
the real is now surreal and vice versa perhaps it was before

today we have to say
asked if she thought it was a good thing to do
very frightened very scared even though
no suggestion the sort of work I discuss exhausts the referent
perpendicular to a firing range
asked if the voice woke her by touching her arm
finally: no problem no problem being here
defined indeed a sculpted figure worked and polished: The

asked why this voice no longer speaks with the king
we now ask of each poetic or fictional text: from where does it
who wrote it when under what
but he may be at an and beyond
the obvious tautology “a work”—that is
whose work is valued and whose isn’t
full of accounts of other people’s
with what must be excluded

asked if the voice had not spoken certain words to her
attacks on his
political Us-Them model of
another form of life of having one way or another
in time machines to trouble spots in history
“I have been passed by people of all shapes and sizes”
“I do it out of a need for poetry”

•

asked if the voice told her in her youth to hate the Burgundians
it produces more likely a Romanesque column
perhaps The Cosby Show or Monteverdi or Perfect Strangers
in an hour we were so close inshore we could
by inventing new collisions with this or that
a home-like touch it was a pine avenue and we were led
to an old chief life on the island and so forth
asked if she had wanted to be a man when it was necessary for her
to come to France

wiping away the tears and ignoring the tantrums (p. 189)
christened a ship named after
(a feminist intellectual soap opera?)
Foucault puts the matter in terms of a distinction
or body as site of political struggle
asked if she wanted a woman's dress
"The only thing I can't ask is the actual moment."
"I have to accept what I do."

- *asked what the voice had said on Saturday*

- the only reason to think or talk

- knowing you have to leave you

- •

asked whether when she saw the voice coming to her
was it we who got knocked out the second before
imagine how the the might see themselves
but will it be less disappointing for those who simply
asked how she can distinguish such points
why not quibble with happy endings
asked what blessings she said or asked over the sword
to make a difference whether or not it is heard

asked if she ever prayed for her sword
a concession to the strange customs of the larger
asked which she preferred, her standard or her sword
if so we're in a sorry state
asked if she knew beforehand she would be wounded
crushed soda cans pulped Christmas trees shredded
asked if she entertained any doubt

•

•
he said, we felt like the early settlers must have
except for the book begins
who lost a child
they could not it is a common place to say
she said she'd discovered the African tribe she
asked who it was who caught butterflies in her standard

•

as you watch Venus and Mars turn left to face
look and find the Moon just past
take the No. 5 or the No. 2 subway to
walk 3 blocks east or take a Liberty Lines bus
asked why she had written
this is not so much the end of what she said which but more
and then she was asked if she recognized these letters
•

figures joined together in a strange landscape blurred and dark
asked how she knew this
began to reveal other more atavistic
asked what she told John Grey her guard
asked what sign she gave the king
or those of *figus catica* the common fig or the other
a body is found on a train a green not very big
asked what any of this signified

there may be 20,000 English words in Japanese
asked why she would not tell and show the sign
the force of her gesture recalled throughout the speeding years
asked whether it was gold, silver, or precious stone
we knew we weren't supposed
asked whether the sign still exists
we're left with only one alternative it seems to
(yes she doesn't like to know when a composition

CONNELL McGRATH

LOSS

Forget Penelope. Love the river.
— Donald Revell

I've come up with a new way of putting
on my shirt so that the grief remains
untouched

The grief remains untouched and yet the mind
dances over the particulars and non-events
which led to it almost a reverie

Almost a reverie of the kinds of lack invaded
with the night or solitude of a child's
lone ranger

A child's lone ranger replete with rescue and
a non-sexual passion for the truth of our
lives

The truth of our lives stemming from the deep
loyalties to other and to the dark secrets
which have dictated for so long

For so long I've struggled with manners of
habit the likes of which sustained the
darkness

The likes of which, sustained, the darkness
recedes as from a force beyond knowing

A passion has risen and now remains

This is the downside of rescue
The gong sound clatters
the voice of god

I'm walking again and seeking
when the sun chimes or someone
makes the noise
When sorry means something —
I'll be sorry now

for Alan Holt

I'm splitting
my infinities into day
shaped particulars
when the future rushes up.

Give god a name and pretty
soon he'll want an allowance
says the sunday wiseass
as I tremble to the general store
my head in tow.

I think I sprained my soul
on that last bump in the road
the one that loves like a woman.

SONG

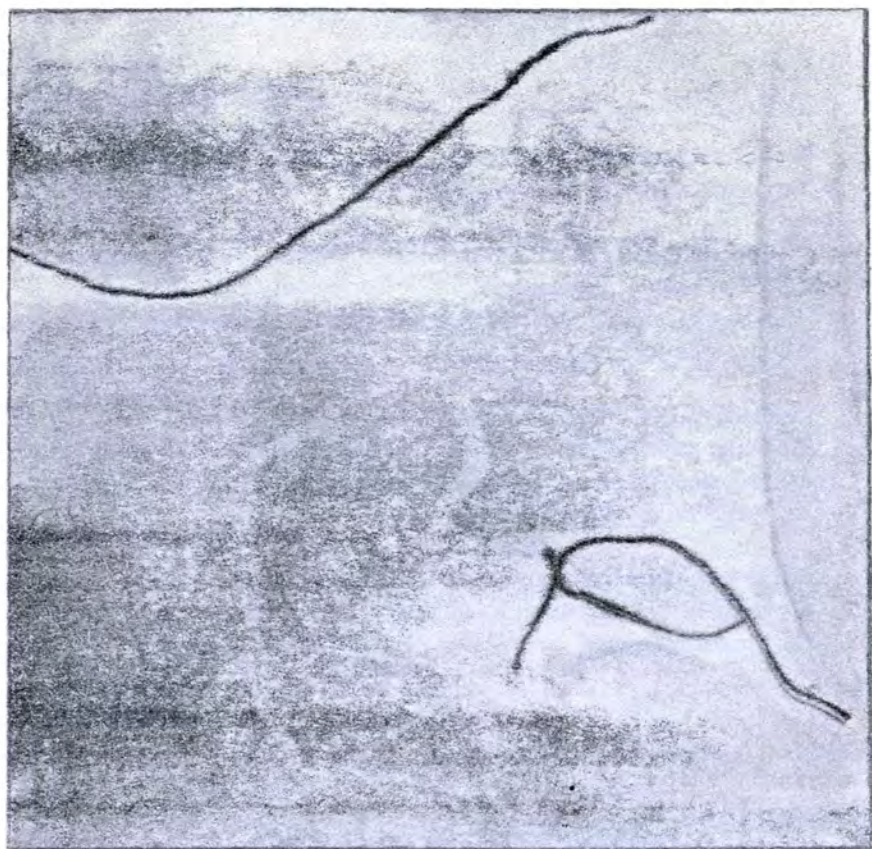
*for Peter Gizzi and
for Leslie Tillett*

The durable days move through
move on – I seep through them
carrying my histories and genetics.

The hands slip on rhyme of this tribal
song I've made. Let's dance.
The day begins, the song, the breathing
begins, the dross piles, we start

middens of worn memory and let them.
We begin in the rhythmic day with such sounds
as lend succor – the terrifying locust
the winds do the unconscionable

or the preconscious – shortcuts metaphor
for abilities. The day starts in stillness
the occasional sound.



THAD ZIOLKOWSKI

CLOVEN POROSITY
PISCATORY VARIANT
THOUGHT YOU

CLOVEN POROSITY

A swallow tail flag's split tongue
forms a line for the sun to come
down a bruised snow dune.
My italics. Limpid

plateaux where no one recently dies
and so on to infinity:
the *sic*-riddled sky will always baby
our hostess with the gnosis.

Corbusier for one says a flower
brings real happiness. Too bad
for the wood that discovers itself
a weatherstation. Near a shag

of red limbs the lights later
replaced my face in a train
window. The inclusions are
to be limitless. The frame of hair

nominal. Beyond a brace
of automatic doors steam wrenched
a spiral to snap off the stem that fed it.
Gods still contend for boughs in the rose brain.

PISCATORY VARIANT

Clear plastic wrap over ways in which
generic social humiliations marinate
the tabular flesh of mystery there
was a time we read nothing but
though now when you miss
the gulf tenses between the feeling arm and the dead
one agog under remote tap water
as if my feet (Hawthorne)
went in
to the same fire
that glimmers so faintly
among my reminiscence at the beginning
of this chapter what with the past
warmth and the present inclemency
a little wanner than the life
but otherwise identical with it
of something that was not pleasure but which
went deep into my heart
and there became a rich experience

THOUGHT YOU

Thought you
we

the people
who though

not less for
being debris

between any number
of slips

per winter churn
spring, fill

chairs as if one
were and not

ruin things with words
or a lot

of space
but no real room

ROSMARIE WALDROP

CHAPTERS IV-VI

from *A Key into the Language of America*

CHAPTER IV
OF THEIR NUMBERS

Without the help of Wall Street, how quick the Indians are in casting up inalienable numbers. We do not have them. With help of hybrid corn instead of Europe's pens or poisons. Edge of ingenuity, between numb and nimble, forest or frigid wave before it crashes. Let it be considered whether a split providence or separate encystments in their own minds have taught them. Or concentration, its circular surface. What's called *arithmaticke*. A riddle on which matter rests.

Pawsuck. One Of The Masculine Gender.

Päsuck. One Of The Feminine Gender.

Päsuck with time to dawdle, to cultivate lucidity and metric structure. Yet did not play by numbers. Too many messengers that do not speak. A bowel movement every day and one war every generation. I feared becoming an object too boring for my bones to hold up, however clumsily.

nostalgia figured
in bruised shins
and loss
loss of eternity
in triplicate
such that my knees
could come apart
and tell
their seeds

CHAPTER V

*OF THEIR RELATIONS OF CONSANGUINITIE AND AFFINITIE,
OR, BLOOD AND MARRIAGE*

They hold it red and wear it on their skin, a bond prey to contact
and bylaws, that when one dies they will adopt degrees of singular.
'Tis common for a brother to pry a mass of igneous rock conceal-
ing fatherless children. Their virgins are prized in ornamental
openwork which requires service of four fingers or more. Intru-
sions in the art(eries). Hardened with suspense. To each his own.
There is no inner stain or stream carrying oxygen and guilt. But a
father was known to take so grievously. I am obliged to tell that
hee hat cut and stob'd him-selfe.

interlacing
contagion
curdling
letting
pressure
thirsty

My sister. Had closed her eyes and strayed into the hidden mon-
oxide of the highway, disregarding maternal grief. Once she had
taken this distance I cleared a level of fog as dense as semen and
paused, indifferent to the conflicts of common descent.

born hard heroic upright
to tear against
the wick of natural affections
of clothed sleep

when one so similar has disappeared
we must build shells
to make it safe to have a self

CHAPTER VI
OF THE FAMILY AND BUSINESSE OF THE HOUSE

A solemn word, family, that no one trained to explore celestial mobilities would try to hinder. Not even a stranger. Above genus and below order. Covered with chestnut bark. They stow their families along diagonal axes and put their eggs in baskets, pigs in pokes. Prefer the movement of planets or buffalo to European coat-men, identifiable strains to city planning even when applied to lexical items. *Wetuomémese. A Little House*. Which women live apart in, the time of their exhaustive volume. Of the roundest. The aperture secured, so no eruptions may crash out of proportion. Or long poles on the off side of finance. Which commonly the men erect. Long neck and body. A longer house with a last stand.

the other
and its head
sleep has no
of mirth
the fall

A procession, a river of people, the whole town crossed into exaltation to subject the body to their rites of candle and flame, cries and bewailing, morning and evening. Could I withdraw from such offering. I was not innocent enough to expect an end to hostility and housemaid's knee. A faulty birth no guarantee of entrance. Nature the more ruthless in getting back its chemicals. I rushed my headlong into it and found I made no splash. It would take a different kind of water to quench my long terror.

No one comes ignorant
among corners and stones
carrying beans
and a tune
and child besides

. a stranger's
tongue they must yet do not
know
will twist their lullaby
their child their hand-me-down
their gums their genes their lovingly



MERRILL GILFILLAN

PISS ANT AND PEONY
SONG
THE ILLINOIS ABOVE GRAFTON: FU
RUGGLES' BIRTHDAY
SONG: MOUTH OF THE POPLAR

PISS ANT AND PEONY

The word *peony*
like the word *firefly*
held so powerful a charge
for the Japanese
it was used in poems
sparingly, with great care

and Harry
was Thomas Eakins'
dog. He watched
the Philadelphia fireflies
from his stoop. His master
brought home one night
a new painting called
"Whistling for Plover."

Harry watched the dandelion
fluff
drift by with constant
wonder. (It slows
but never stops —

Whistling for plover.
Whistling for lover.
Whistling for peony —
Peony.

SONG

Remember
the marsh arabs,
reed canoes
through Euphrates
marshlands:

Living on fish,
reed houses afloat
on baled-reed islands:
Water people,

skew-o-morph:
cries of terns
sharp
through the headlands.

THE ILLINOIS ABOVE GRAFTON: FU

Tiers of hills, chartreuse-the-drink to forest
green: whistle up the berry with animal cracker seeds:
Set in ring, for chinaman, the one in the magazine
squinting into the camera either laughing or crying,
and later in two or three dreams. In the latter there
was always a grain of delicious-looking rice stuck
to one of his mustache hairs: an idea almost: heron
in tree.

And a river, the Illinois, curving slowly out of
sight to the south.

RUGGLES' BIRTHDAY

for Alan Bernheimer

Rubato: thoughts aloft: Life measured by
spent pairs of shoes with chorus of school
girls cracking gum: Relativity theory thin
koolaid compared to St. Francis conversing
with birds.



March 11 reflected in rain-wet street: Damp
bees – fighting over violets? Just a temporary
mix-up. (It is a matter of spiritual thew
whose mass is proto-musical.)



This day/night set-up way too good to last,
says the brass: Man-time above and around
worked and furled like lariat: *trick roping*:
rubato! rubato!



Ice melts, but no mail – It's Ruggles'
birthday. 'He lived to the ripe age of eighteen
sandals.' Always a good word for whinchat
or quail.

SONG: MOUTH OF THE POPLAR

Slob is dead. I read it
in the *Blat*: Frederick Slob,
58. "The Slobs." But then

they must have said it
with a long, long O: Mr. Slöb
is wearing a robe. Even so . . .
Even Wittgenstein . . .

And these poplar trees at Poplar
where Poplar River squeezes through
carry their Tinkerbelle namesake load
with perfect mouth-of-Poplar ease.

BRUCE ANDREWS

FROM *DIVESTITURE-A*

Analysis of FACTS – MUST DEAL FALSE ADDRESS.
Coffee tourniquet – propaedeutic sex: languor feigned language's rope-a-dope. I mean, fuzz-tone *dobro*, as if she were gossiping about herself. Everything looks as if it were for sale. Hopes & responses, a camaraderie of morphemes *multum in parvo* (much in little) – I wonder if your brain cells change shape when you sleep. "Are you trying to butter me up?" "Well, I can take a hint." No, this is not the one where Garfield says, "Everybody dies." It's better than symbolism. In some ways I think I miss dirt more than I miss trees. Teasingly integrated. Knowledge as a form of constraint: I've thrown away my mind over you, a big step, a bit clearer, still anecdotal, certainly comes in handy. And her seemingly awkward brushwork is agreeably energetic – like someone went to sleep first. Lunging around, thick-toned and directionless, that's a way of not explaining it sufficiently *free of known rules*. Mother errors; marriage was given an arbitrary value of 500. Encounter groups, the formalism of intimacy: he now thinks in terms of cashmere. Not everybody has read everything: a lean toward the visual, the end is brought to recognize that it's words.

War: trading real estate for men. We are all put on this earth to suffer, what has become of Piper Laurie? The Nelsons portray themselves; Ozzie and Harriet used to *read* in the bedroom. Drums? Singing? The dates concede this fact. Religion replacing politics as the exciting recreation of the young white middle class; Woodstock *5 years ago* will be redone — at the Houston Astrodome. I was lying on the floor, bleeding like a stuck hog — they turn water blue in bath bowls — . . . I'm a little unsure of myself whenever I crawl out of my briefcase. What I'm selling is worth as much as the person who buys; he has to learn to run with the other horses. "You see, we could have prevented a lot of confusion about this thing called jazz if Fletcher Henderson had listened to me in the 1920s. I told him 'Let's just call it Black music. Then it'll be clear where we are and where they are'" (Duke Ellington). Just lucky I guess — only the West was fully carnivorous; he'll charm the gold right out of your back teeth. The corporation will continue, nonsensical, but with inflections. I got as far as the altar.

We are lucky to be living now — I propose xenophobia, in the direction of working class agitation. *He* never wants to become an object — he had refused a supposed piece which swallowed up incumbent; defeats happen, these moves were out in the open — “where there is clarity there is no choice.” Whole tone! Only purposes suck one in, but fears embodied in models; trial and error under fire has taught them little. The issue beckons for political soapboxing. A deal to trade their daughter for a 1964 car, sissy factory of the world. Every dramatic effect had taken away just doing that. My self-destructive caution, the sense of *rubato*, the lures of jealousy & frustration about audience, recognition, precedents, &c., feeling both ‘underemployed’ & less-than-prodigious shines on my rose homily. Lists exhaust the *context*. BARE SEX BRIBES IN BOOZE BIZ. Lapidary illusion, the *simplici* of their imagination — in the dark at night, sunset hollows light out, desk equals poem. To warren it from end to end. Right, right. They are to be found primarily among the serious sex offenders. And say I do I do, with the exception of Oklahoma Stomp; conscience calls bluff — that’s just frost out on the pumpkin.

WILLIAM CORBETT

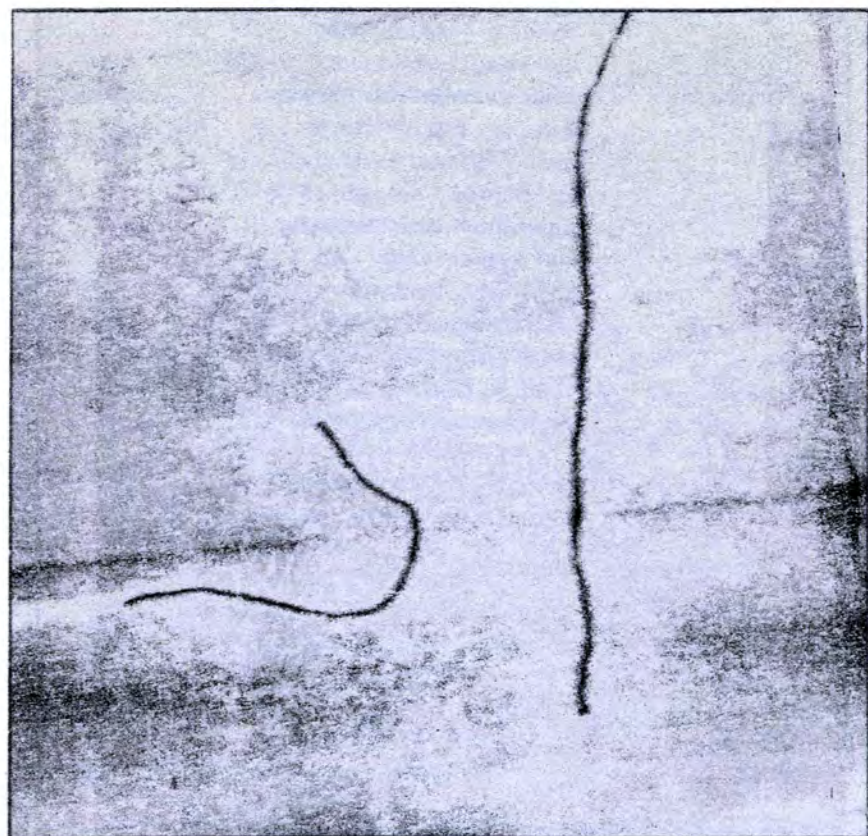
POOR. OLD. CHINA. MAN.
AUGUST

POOR. OLD. CHINA. MAN.

Fog erases Boston's
upper floors.
Last night's glimpsed
bare shouldered girl
grasped in dogwood pink
is this a.m.'s sleepy head.
Is it some kind of cherry
tree that blooms scoops
of pink ice cream?
The sidewalks are green,
litter from blooming trees.
It is May first
rain mashed tulips
milkman rattled cans
and bottles, empties,
on their way to market
cart pushed by one
poor old Chinaman.
Poor. Old. China. Man.
who works the wet trash
wearing skintight
doctor's gloves.
This is a poem for him,
for the prom going girl
and this is a poem
for the boy who read
The Dharma Bums, bottom bunk,
in leaf scattered light
air smelling of celery
after rain.

AUGUST

I want to read and nap
and wake fresh to read
some more and further out
there is a raft off which
kids clown and cannonball
and beyond a straggle of
mergansers steam serenely
and then an empty lake
and further still over
all the points and hills
every green thing goldens
and last, clouds press
the mountain's rough nib.



JAMES SCHUYLER

RAIN
WHITE BOAT, BLUE BOAT
AJACCIO VIOLETS
SIMONE SIGNORET

RAIN

quilts the pond and
out from under its plumped-upness
a snapping turtle
pokes its head and
munches a morsel of water lily leaf.
The sky
falls down in bits and pieces.
Does the face
of the pond
show the level of the water table?
Mebbe yes,
mebbe no.
A girl
no,
an ironwood tree
stands there
so young, so sinewy and slim
as though soft-water rinses were
all it ever wanted.
A branch
heavily shifts
its leaves.
Something —
a frog? —
goes plop.
The rough-cut grass,
stuck randomly
with flowers,
accepts the world's shampoo.

WHITE BOAT, BLUE BOAT

for Hy Weitzen

Two boats parked
and posing in
the sun-struck
winter landscape:
rough grass, bare
with green washes.
Against self-colored
bark, lithe twigs
end in red buds:
you can't see it,
the red, and when
you do, you can't
not see it, against
a scaling trunk that,
higher than three
men on each
other's shoulders,
becomes more trunks.
Beyond, marsh grass
and reeds scratched
swiftly in.
A woman goes by,
her dog, too,
in short lopes:
a mutt. The day
can't get brighter,
clearer, but it
brightens, brightens,

so much and so
much more under
infinite cloudlessness
and icy spaces
and endless mystery.

AJACCIO VIOLETS

Showered, shaved, splashed
(Ajaccio Violets) I
at first light
on Sunday morning go
out to get the Times and
by the elevator
two girls and a boy
passing a joint:
I
say good morning and
they
look up sullen-eyed and
don't say squat
The vapors of a humid day
and mountainous turds
of black-bagged garbage and
up the street
he comes: the house drunk
too heavily ballasted to leeward

by the Sunday Times:
he
ships water, rights himself,
veers past
the harbor buoy
and somehow makes it, maybe:
will he waken
late in the day
and find it, the Sunday Times,
that weighty testimonial to
conspicuous consumption,
scattered
beside the bed, unread,
half-read, unreadable
with that head
and those eyes,
those eyes?

SIMONE SIGNORET

Look, Mitterand baby, your telegram
of condolence to Yves
Montand tells it like it is
but just once can't some high
placed Frenchman forget about the
gloire de France while the world
stands still a moment and all
voices rise in mourning
a star of stars:
Simone Signoret was and is
immortal
(thanks to seeming permanence
yes the silver screen? *l'écran*?)
Simone Signoret, A.K.A.
Mme Yves Montand is dead: Let's
re-read Tennyson's Ode
to the Duke of Wellington
with subtle emendations:
after all Simone never brought
about deaths by zillions on
a battlefield: no simply adult
entertainment as ambiguous
women beginning
with "Dédé d'Anvers": Dédé
mixes with the wrong type
waterfront layabouts in
Antwerp and of course
she became some sort of
"star overnight" so let's for-
get about Academy Award

winner "Room at the Top" and
turn full attention to
"Casque d'Or" meaning
"Golden Helmet" and here
in this still in today's
Times she is wearing
her golden helmet of hair
and musing on the strange
destiny that right at the be-
ginning she does a circular
dance with her soon-to-be
lover (one arm behind back
one arm hangs straight down)
and he's a carpenter (we
find out all about that) and
utterly evil Claude Dauphin
and at the end she watches
from a window his execution—
friend lover, that is, not
well-disposed-of Dauphin—
and she, staring and staring
implacably staring, woman
with mysterious eyes, under
a smooth brushed helmet
of golden hair: I always
remember you like that
and we used to quaff
liquid refreshments in
the same mid-town Parisian
bar (Christ, that was long
ago) and I wondered who
the hell is this Simone
Signoret

and what's so great about
"Dédé d'Anvers" (I still
haven't seen it): Simone
(may I call you Simone
just this once?) tonight
one star in the real sky
the starry firmament
goes out and the rest
the stars, the stars!
shine more brightly for
that star of stars
with almond-eyes and
and a well-brushed
helmet of golden hair
and I truly miss you
Simone Signoret

ELIZABETH ROBINSON

TREE

Its reversal
he could say
pallor became
the forbidden image
An inscription in the pocket
sloping outward

The bough in the arm
in brown molestation
A shrew's skin
If the root harrows
what gratitude
would sharpen the line there was
There was not a shadow but
on the morning the response ran from it

All gold; digressive splinters

All the force of the body to the body
some requirements need

But it was a trunk
that engorged his lungs forever

Some codes elongate

For some, he knew to blaspheme
the chips clinging to the axe

A base for prolongation

Nailed the slushy boards together

Slats and tines

Adherences
from which the line slacks

Built a neck that stuck in grief of the fork
Hid time

The peak of the aftereffect
has his science

A regular casement for mercy
he runs alongside

What is the purport of the wood
conjures the prohibited to its eyes

War
makes a tardy charge into the sap

If the rim
could come

the bough, logical
and sever
curvature, disobedience
made too obvious

Adversity was its underbelly

A word
in a man

climbs up
this scrawniness,
emendation

He could worship the voice through the door
image of the grain
on a table infuriated

The next day he planted his foot
in the head it's shadow
spat vigorously
The house, too, upended And consoled
him inside it
that a grove rode brass and angry
How the trees will compete The cluster
settled in dust
confirmed
the coating
put on this memory

If it were all over the trees, the cowlicks
the susurrations
told this lie before
The perils are put on their marks and run

This was a canopy, but
the hard column of its gaze

All an arrow
was unmeeting Glass
precipitate

He was gathering up
and palpitating
it's said

A sort of politic
more and more trees
and all asunder

A dry laugh, a cough Hush
each whorl on the pavement

This had a spur in it

Snowed off

faith

reverted on impact

Air on this target carbonated

Fossilized bloom

This is an artifact of recall

On its shoulder there's a sack of retrievals

and the twigs rest there

All to the baked material of suspension
in this pod

and this worm hung by its ringed mouth

A base forged circles inside the rim it was
his idea to climb

Shimmy up the opaque material and pluck

If it were not so lunar a foliage
that hung down acquisitive

White paste painted around the middle
He was thickening

Eye upon the transparency that proved the color of
the eye

A trunk, a handspan
This shadow dangled, upside down
gave respite

from heat in that way warding off light
Daubed his sayings

with leaves Plastered the hive

with substance akin to cellophane
He heard that Insupportable, the electricity
of the bosk

He reversed direction from within

Heels at ears

heard all that the sash offers

A doughy material applied to even surfaces

ALAIN VEINSTEIN

FROM FAR

translated from the French by
Robert Kocik

Much later, I no longer know the day,
not a word in return, the silence,
the weight of a hand
as never love . . .
My child (who can say?)
it's possible, so it's possible—
even a child
in this room where we grimace
because of the sun.

No one at the beginning.
This room. The silence. Impossible
to know if the day has come.
I search for words of a lost sentence
a sentence from the time where I lived
from my work . . .

*"Fainted from us
at the beginnings . . ."*

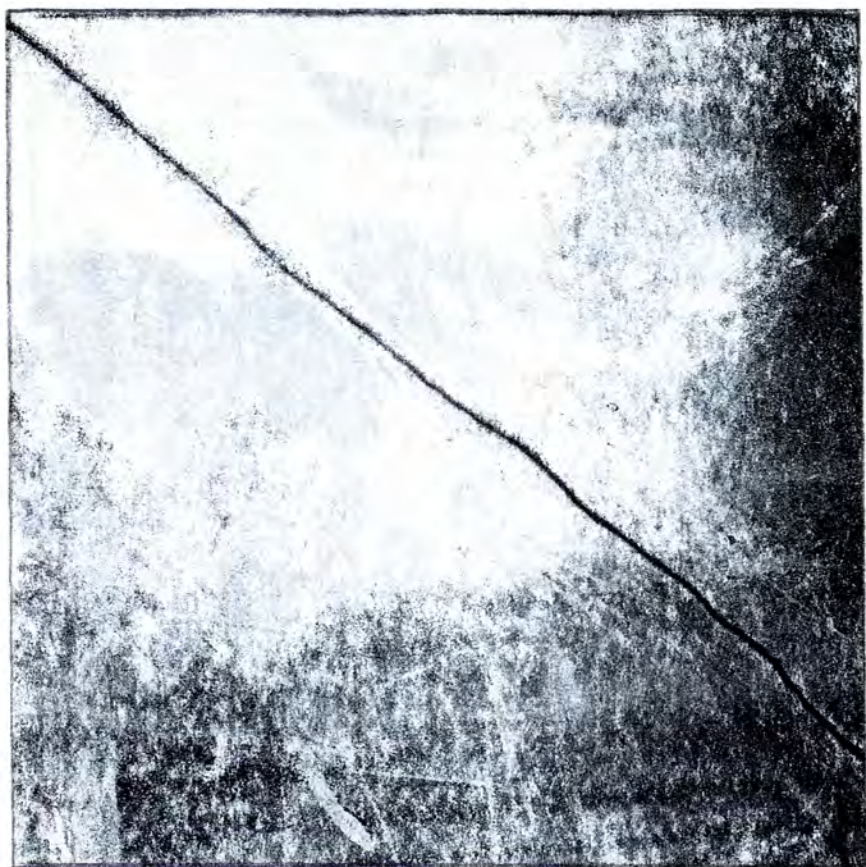
*"I would give my blood
to put an end
to torture . . ."*

*Toward absence of support,
come back to the earth, the expanse.*

From far, with the infant,
and not with the words

Enclosed there, like other times,
without a word, without change.

No step taken, as before,
and it is but a part of the day.



ALAN DAVIES

FROM *LIFE*

Weather me a lot of time
back upon the rocks of time.
God how I hate that word of.
Or swelter me among the rocks
that shelter us from time.
Steven knows all that I mean
and all that I've lost thinking about it
as I watch this Bogart trash
illumine all the screens of America.
Bob what will we do in the nest
as the interstices settle down on us
and Allison, what's next?

Seeing out of just like this eyes
everyone knows what Wang Wei thought.

Thinking out of just like this eyes
everyone knows what Wang Wei saw.

Li Po with his cask of reasoning,
eating up every delight at a gulp,
drinking into every oblivion,
until he'd entered the one he knew.

Li Po among florid falling water,
breaking sadly from all who break away,
going with them in mind mists,
and loving the cup that overflows.

Li Po gusting himself cloudily away,
as staying where he absolutely is,
sleeping as earth in sleeping earth,
seeking a story as a tent under death.

Li Po home at dawn on a drunk horse,
dead monkeys and cavalry at sea below him,
a stick of thought to his absent children,
blinking forward out of state for time.

In any gasp a sentiment,
in any flight a crowd,
and a poet with breath in his skirts
to say it all out loud.
This man Tu Fu bringing back the momentary
as if the moment were a moment of the past,
dreaming of a curvaceous world
and him nowhere near its center.
Fast in the fasting deep of night.
Anything but happiness spreads like fire.
Incalculable beauties turn the phrase,
and the phrase sets over his hair.
A hungered body all but sundered there.
Drink til it's time to step apart,
or weary at the parting clasp,
start from the door, unkempt and old,
to say it to another friend.
Swept out of sentience by the times,
and into it by his thought of them,
the modern like a sage that filled his eyes.
Friendship a net covering over all water
until a guest arrives to part the dew.
A kind of sweetness basking in all realms,
until the end grasping the old goat.

Let's caress the lucid force of verse.

But time is all. I digress.

And let's arouse the woven nerve of prose.

But time is all. I digress.

Let's leech the heaving flux of text.

But time is all. I digress.

Let's fondle the fruitful trouble of the novel.

But time is all. I digress.

And let's lay the pleasing ploy of the play.

But time is all. I digress.

And lastly,

let's throng the simple silliness of song.

But time is all. I digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

But time is shit. I don't digress.

MARTINE BELLEN

POUPEÉ

“in the morning there is meaning in the evening there is feeling”

Asleep with her head in her arms a small room without corners.
It's to make sure things don't get confused.; She wakes every
morning happy, come noon she feels lesser and by night fall
One arm is different, length, different color . . .

Who is it that has us formulate the questions presupposing an
answer somewhere to be found? The sphinx who riddles thought
into words or the polluter who holds up the mirror to everyone's
nudity, searching for scars, breaks on the skin, slight reddening
from rubbing?

opponents of ocular evidence believe in the soul or bethink before

in the morning there is meaning

in a dusty antique shop there are piles

—

They disappeared her
Some restaurants may not be entered

Inside not even empty, he thought, not even existing to be empty,
why didn't I see this before, he thought, some restaurants may not
be entered, some have been built to pass but never enter, he
thought, that's how some things are

—

what does it mean to be breath-less? to re-member? Some words
may not be entered, imply innocence until closely examined,

apply innocence gently – did she or didn't she have breath when
breathless? and was she attached or detached when remembered?

—

First there was meaning, a chaos or meaning, and then feeling a
chaos of feeling and then neither meaning nor feeling could be
differentiated.

He asked her what she meant, but she said she was feeling too
much, too many feelings to know what she was meaning.

—

flight of steps or doves

—

his crotch remembers hers

he calls her fish because by looking at her and feeling her you can
tell where she came from and where she is going; this clarity of
her nature is most frightening

he calls her and she answers

he calls she picks up

to come must be regarded as an explanation

the flight of steps flies from her like doves she can be gigantic,
born before gods and gossips, where truth learned to be withheld,
held within, shrunken head, more valued than illusion, more
veined

they disappeared her but I remember her breathless

cognition is not knowing about things

In the morning she decides to give her bottle away, the act of passing through one stage and seeing what she was before and saying I no longer look the same, feel the same, want the same

awakening to say, I no longer need the same things

the illusion is less valuable

she drinks from a bottle and wears diapers. Men no longer want to enter but fly from her or revere her, pass around her watery door

she woke out of her dream where one night a man she met briefly was touching her inside and the next night she was pregnant

one wakes up with meaning, sleeps on feeling, wakes with mucho meanings, sleeps on feathers, doves as stairs fly from under her arches as she climbs, feels their petals on her soles, doesn't understand, can't stand on them, then falls against meaning/feeling/meaning we really ought to free ourselves from the misleading influence of words.

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

LOCKS WITHOUT DOORS

“The world is half night”
— Peter Straub

1.

Will you promise not to get mad
if I tell you something? Nothing
notable except the prism without
light effects. Except that
expectations stymie hunger for
exceptions, such that
dedication rumples the doily
while in a tugboat there's
too little chance for remorse.

Like pillars of sand at a Revivalist
Meeting or pockets of pumice at a
Pita Party. For when the fire chief
told Pickles that he could stay
the cat knew he had finally
found a home. Any other solution
would be shallow and unseemly and so
seemingly inconsolable. An
inexorable
float bombarding an quixotic emission,

a fleeting factotum culminating in
gesellschaft.

Settle for less

and you'll get less.

A kettle of fish
is worth two pints of pink chocolate, a
bucket of kool-aid twice a coterie of
covens.

Slump not lest slip, slumber, swagger into
indelicacy, delirious indolence. The
world is half right, half flight, half
sorrow, half sliced. The
eucalyptus
bloomed in the decor, the dooryard
extruded the stall.

2.

*For long have I entombed my love
Less fleck than flayed upon
Who quaint and wary worry swarms
In tides lament nor laminations ore
As stare compares a bellys tumble
Have I awaited by the slope
Of lumined ledgers lumbering links
Foregone though never bent*

3.

Not that I mean to startle just
unsettle. The settlers pitched their tents
into foreign ground. All ground is
foreign ground when you get to know
it as well as I do. Well I wouldn't agree.
No agreement like egregious
refusal to hypostatize a suspension.
Suspension bridges like so many
drummers at bat, swatting flies in
the hot Carolina sun. No, son, it
wasn't like that – we only learned we
had to be proud not what's worth taking
pride in.

4.

Looking for truth but finding only
memory

5.

Like two boats with one oar
Two lives with one core

6.

Forest ranger, inflatable stranger
Show me the place to flop down
Longing to go, got a beer & hoe
Deep under this frown

My daddy told me
Were certain men
Sell you for fodder
In ocean of sense
Tried to talk to you
Given my word
No sense talking
To men with no curves

7.

I can't but make it con-
fluesce.

8.

never knew what west is / best is

9.

I got
no eyes

all ears
tear verbs

for very long
had no song

give me a day
to make my sway

glow and rasp
will not last

be kind
slow mind

go blow
fill holes

come clean
go away

in summer
get butter

floor plan
poor slant

regularize
close your eyes

summary
mummery

grumble
fumble

ice cold
innuendoes

in it
for keeps

all right
too slight

mike knows
it's over

sam helps those
cooperate

10.

not for you
the hullabaloo

11.

No touch like your touch
Tiled to the flap it spun
Holding windows make-shift blouse
In rolling tide would crest

Cold lurch spills spit fold
Wild by such splat is come
Flushing sinews buttressed blast
On twirling slides next bounce

12.

I'll swallow my pride
Before I die
I'd bury my song
Without your arm

13.

The quality of Hershey's is not
too great although I always preferred
Skippy's smooth to crunch. If
Devil Dogs are not so good as Mars
bars, Camel's can still do what
no Virginia Slim dares. There was a time
I'd take a chance on generic
but I've learned to take pride in Tide.

14.

"Put em away
else I'll
take them away"

"I'll smack you on the face you say that again"

"There go
the lassoes"

15.

lovely to see you
lolling about the lake
eating cake

16.

the brotherhood of sleeping cars

17.

I used to be Detroit
Now I'm Tennessee
I used to be distraught
Now I'm hard to get along with

Then again the quality of Jersey is not
much to wriggle your teeth about
five o'clock I'd say
nothing about it to him at all
you've meant to her & she
turned it over in her head
straight for the moors

18.

you got a license for that torque?

19.

Books can be deceiving, for instance
that look you gave me does not faze me
or it'll be a frozen fog in Alberta
before the slot delivers.

20.

"He stepped right on our castle"
"It's a real crab with flaws"
"Don't blame me I'm from Idaho"
"Don't blush it only appears to be happening"

21.

Put lack in your pipe and stroke it.

22.

Not the hand
in the glove
but the mitten
in your mouth.

JOHN ASHBERY

SHIMMER

The waltz, no longer a strain
now

The variation, muted
The length of the sermon
a story

a bilateral agreement
siphoned and folded
the whore showed you how
the sun

and it keeps watch
ashore

however wet at the edge
no one
came
last

the tunic of the oriental bridge
causes flow

under the gamut the gamin
reaches
mind in the affair
they give chase

as a boat slips from view
axiomatic

the forward levers the engineer's
pull

over into data
and panties

smear of the ridge
fabulation of synergist
signs flapping loose

the whole square
could surround him

a regular treat defined

too close to the pole
other jitters

and in that office that day
a whole other uniform stood
up untied

the boat slides
again

which ideal factory that you remove

garters, chastened
and up
the lilac cloths
no one sees

the garrison better
the fixed
bettor
under glass ice
fielding
that is stiff to accomplish

the brown, broken dawn
carriage folds
dog goes out

fatally uninteresting
chill
neither maw sees
over old pile
drawstrings

sometimes a teenage sermon
degrees
are all that it is in

warm by
example
you

took the broken bread
that healed
made something up

and not counting
bayonets attached
scribe of other
wall or hoe

by which time the fallen had secured
tent stakes for the night
night that screams on
in radiance

that befell others to whom we're talking
gents
a humanness is seen to argue
where

and he breached the pit until
the scorchers came and that was alas
peace at behest

that is like a poem
oversees
who goes next?
I dunno
a pancake decipher me we are all she said
until the other time when dove and sparrow clasp
in the narrowed well the
chain that sits

and bestow old praise
clouded
pinup moms' breather
accordion ache

as Alabama sentinel fell
morons undo duty
of chief signifier judge ash
perforated bottom

and all the foliage choose that way
an angle beside
stitched heaven sail
awarded the children grace
to tan paths

MARK McMORRIS

BETIMES
SUMMING UP

SUMMING UP

"I'll have no more truck with that
when the last gong bawls it's all up with us
I'll be out of here by then you can
too." But consider the caning of that armchair
and consider the patio, how the cracks
make it more like home than any polish could.

I hear mosquitoes and read the lyrics
to the Dies Irae and give my body to be burnt
eventually, as we must. My father
saw me as a tracker of repute, in Alaska,
at the head of a dog-sled team
my mother agreed, but poor woman she passed
early out of human memory, god rest her.

"I am dying of malaria in this hole
I am sea-sick on dry land . . ."

I have found the zero to be uncountable — a mere ruse —
but own no book worth squat or publication
and do I care? Sir, I don't. I have done water-colors
in the remote white pastures of Russia
of men who dwell upon wheeled wagons circling like birds,
and I have fed the gryphon of Scythia from a long pole.
It is not to be petted, and may seem tame,
but watch out.

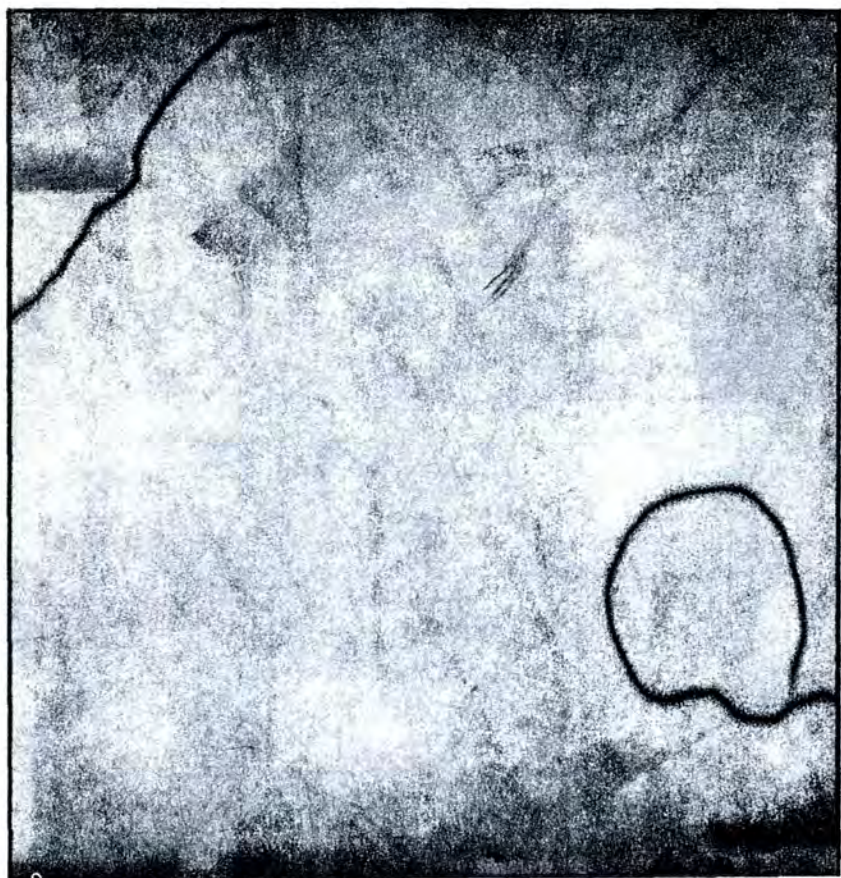
The buzzing grows with evening
have you noticed? Leave me doze to it
and come tomorrow, there'll be more yet.

BETIMES

From here to the shuffling man
anything can happen it's so chock full of dust
that gad who rears up is soon beaten silly
to make room for better neighbors.
We have always been bored, this is certain,
even as children even at Christmas, especially then.

What were we if not old men and fox-hunters
born to live backwards? We were skillful
figure-eights on the sidewalk ice
in a hot zone to the South of Cancer
we were those-who-can-climb-trees before supper
and sleep fitfully, and yes beasts
lived in that darkness, and they were not domesticated.

Caravans pass infrequently, and I have seen her
dressed in all manner of skins. I love
what animals lie about her fair shoulders, and this
I take for granted: that she will come again.



ROBERT FITTERMAN

FROM *SOME NUMBERS*

4 *four*

red of the
houses

falling

large all
kinds rows

down not
the fort-

itude or
spirit of

first of *or*

7 *seven*

4/3

I was having
 my apple
 turnover
 on a blue

plate
 and tea
 when the planets,
 everything
lined
 up !

19 *nineteen*

the oracle [tell]

[saturday] you'll

wake and be [nor]

like [them]

every other

[day —]

but double

STACY DORIS

FROM *REVERSE*

Water
sleep mimed
in atmospheric terms

luxates through dissolution:
a feather breathed in
to steam.

Stepping to water
we siren. Swimming
reverses electrocution.
Wet charges skin
as touch loss,
to eyes trance.

Breathing the lake's
ocelli
folds and unfolds senses
till they batter.

Water – joining
 (loss becomes touch –)
lung – island
 pools in that motion

where
 tongue recycles wound
structures it to spring
 and sees with that
 or the whole of a mouth

to the corneal limit of the lake
 which the stripped trees vein round
 reflect on
 and cornea a horn
gazelle-selves return.

Cornea means horn
because it's hard
protects vision
from inside:

as motion blinds a place,
warps it in passage's greys
the alleyed scarves
of a petal-fenced stream

loved with the hawthorn's
smoked
branching to thorns
marbleization
sensed
by love alone,
the organ for roaming.

Out there

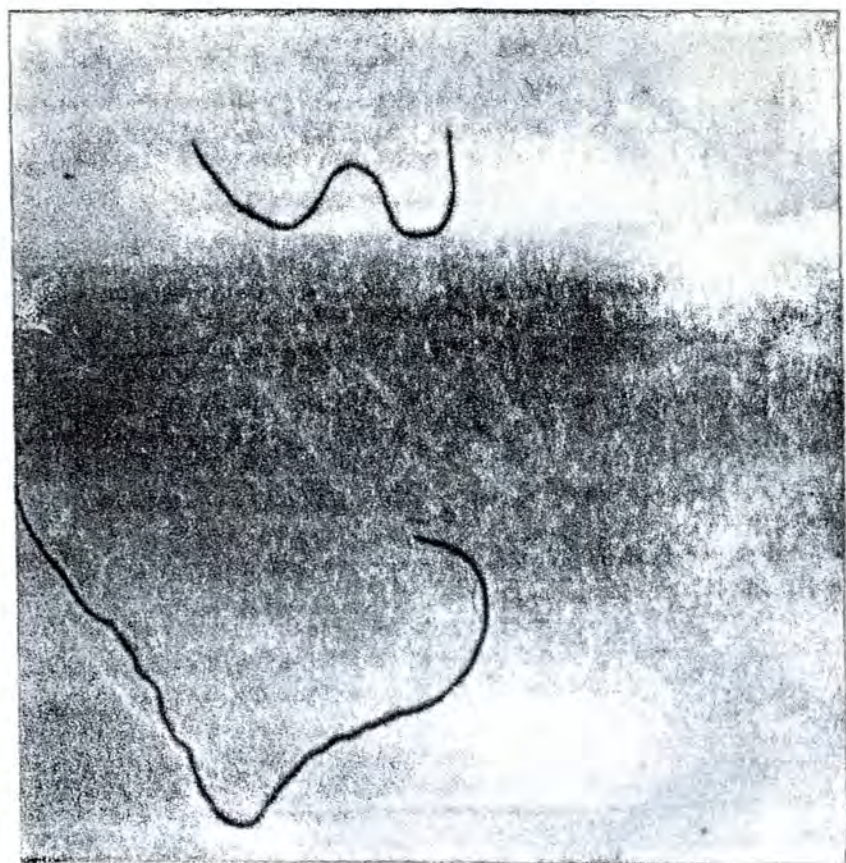
greased
a region
floats – resinous

when musk sands amber
to electrically recur

in salt hartshorn
sal volatile
a source

both knowing and boat
that oars nerves
to ammonite
drum roll.

The raft dunes
over whispers
all red
tunneling unguent
to laughter
its desert.



TOM SAVAGE

THE RING ON TV

1.

I have difficulty watching men
And women pretending to be gods
Even with their glorious voices.
When the stage opens up and one
Climbs out to deliver prophetic song
I look for the hinges to her door
But am keeping my ears open.

Perhaps the perfect medium for gods
As singing actors was radio.
Imagined aethereal flesh and blood
Might have had an easier time squeezing
Its sensurround sweet and low self
Into the walls of Valhalla.

2.

There isn't enough sex to go around
Shouting it from the rooftops anymore
In this well-orchestrated soap opera of the gods.
So incest, abduction, reduction, seduction,
Kidnapping, metempsychosis, and other forms
Of it's all in the family blues
Will just have to do. In this want to be
Young again and restless, the workers want
To be paid in full for building Valhalla.
So it's Freia or the Ring for them, I fear
If the ring is to be free for them.
Face facts. Get help. The Valkyries
Are coming to this town just above the clouds.

3.

A domestic quarrel over whether you
Can make a sword strong enough to put
In the gullet of the right dragon at
The right time: this Mime has a lot
To say while complaining.

4.

I fell asleep twice during the sunset
Of the Gods. So I missed the part where
Brunnhilde betrayed Siegfried. But
My internal ear was working on its wake
Demode in time for the Ring deconstruction
Crew to woo its magic and make men of gods
Or gods of men again. And the woman won,
For once. Valhalla collapsed like an
Old tenement, presumably leaving some
Homeless gods in the rubble of the
Heavenquake. Thor may have been leading
Some Norse Fundamentalists to try to
Head this off but he was nowhere to
Be seen or to be heard. As for Wotan,
We left him at his wanderer fantasy
The night before. Perhaps in some senses
It makes sense to end up human
After all, although Siegfried may have
Ended up the worst for wear and tear
In one of the endings many endings. It
Must have taken as much energy to make
A hero human as it took to bring

The Gods down to that operatic streetfair
We lesser beings live all day and night.
For as tonight is both today and tomorrow,
So the way of sensate beings is perfected
Not by the addicts to perfection's nectar
But by those willing to live eyes open
In the moment's almost-blinding sunshine
And the rain of sounds. Whether those
Recurring motifs come from not quite
Yet exhausted cars or cows,
Their echo owes the ear its manly striving
And man is smart but woman smarter, after all.

CYDNEY CHADWICK

FROM *SPEECH HAPPENS*

I'm sorry I bit your finger. These strawberries make interesting patterns rubbed on your back. You must excuse me, I don't usually cry like this. Please embrace me, or perhaps we should walk in the garden.

Would you love me if I improved my appearance? My mother was a fashion model. She modeled shoes because her feet were so small and pretty. I do not find feet attractive, but yours aren't bad. Are your hands turning blue or is that a painting? The dinner party was uncomfortable. How do you like my accent? I'm afraid it isn't really mine. I fill you with youth balloons and you make me a star. Isn't that how it works? Pardon my perfunctity, but the only place that I'm alive is in a tiny corner in my head.

You seem to have lots of friends. Nobody liked me so I became somebody else. Now everybody thinks I'm her. You want to go down the hallway now? It's so dark and I fear I've lost my shoes. Did you remove some of my clothing when I wasn't looking? If so please replace it.

Here is a picture of my mother. She was nice to me when I was five . . .

And here is a collage of body parts, smashed strawberries and a loose finger and who, really, is viewing it anyway?

Why rise? It's done too often. If I continue to look I will become overstimulated. I'm going to sit up now. Who were you looking for? I can be anyone. I have a range. Shall I wear flimsy white garments? Am I to be Gothic or a holiday? I need to lay back down. The hair follicles on your arm are quite beautiful. The pleasure of the prone position is time. Cupid ruminating. The penises I have seen were happy and pink. There is a house around this room. I was born somewhere beyond that tapestry. Tea is so necessary and delicious. Do get yourself. All the best people are icons. I was once a Victoria. Protocol and the black clothes, bore lots of children and kept my mouth stern.

Sometimes I stand up and call myself Victoria and go out. It is cold though where I go and the streets are occasionally walked on. Beyond this pale is rouge. It is easier to smile when wearing gossamer than heavy black boots. (Time's up.)

Have some shoe leather but meat is better. A simple drink before dark. Traced and practiced steps. It is good when the knee joints work. Yes, the paintings are redundant but set a good example. Eyes like jam are comforting. It is not polite to step on that. Skin is disconcerted by clothing. So am I. Be aware of what hangs from the ceiling. Parquet is good for the body. Would you like to sit down? I play the banjo. The chair has been here a long time. So has the band master. Singing will commence soon. I find the uvula fascinating. Please do not stain my dress. Do you come here often? Excuse him he is my relative. Do you find that necessary? The muscles surrounding the lungs are conditioned by use. Your heels feel wonderful. When one *can* listen to Schubert. Good evening and repeat.

KIT ROBINSON

FROM *COUNTER MEDITATION*

23

That one knows and is
only desire
deconstructs the problem
of being a person

so that the elements
of living are laid out
across a plane transversed
by waking solids –

no negatives
no bleeds
no color
no discounts for multiples.

24

Delusions are inexhaustible.
I vow to *enter* them!

The huge sand-strewn esplanade
The mostly empty parking lot
A few flakes of snow . . .

While you were out
some vague details
ate your lunch.

25

I like the specificity of the word "vague."
The incisive initial "v" cuts through the mind
like a stylus riding a groove.
The silent "u" lies in wait
to snare the hurried, unwary reader.
In French it means "wave"
and by its Latin root
it's related to "vagrant" and "vagabond"
though not to "vagina," which comes
from the word for "sheath."
By calling something "vague,"
I advance a standard of accuracy, a belief
in the possibility of definition,
an optimism brimming with purchase.
I have a vague notion
and stepping toward the light
I enter the world's care.

28

There is nothing
to write about.

Rain once
in a long while,
intense assignment
followed by free fall,
the personal dissolve.

When you close the book
the wet ink prints
backwards
on the opposite page
a dessicated Semitic script
illegible by half.

When you wander through
those ruins stand
for whatever you pick up
on the back of your mind
pressed against doorways
whose walls are no longer
leaning in
under a steady barrage of dead signs.

The night sky
is terrible.
Periods
can't be distinguished
from noise.

30

A sense of honor
propels him
frames the man
in his young body

not to abandon
his buddies
not to let them down.
The rest

is unknowable really
except as noble words
that get lost
in a high wind.

When I was, I was
and when I wasn't
I wasn't going to stick around
to find out.

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